

FAQs For Foreign Nurse License Candidates

Frequently Asked Questions

1. With whom should I speak for help to begin the process?

Contact the Iowa Board of Nursing at 515-281-3255 or visit the board's Website at www.iowa.gov/nursing. Choose the licensure tab and then Exam.

2. What is the licensing process in Iowa?

- a. Individuals who were educated and registered/licensed as nurses in a foreign country must have their credentials evaluated by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) prior to application for the NCLEX if they have never been licensed in a U.S. jurisdiction.

- b. Application materials for CGFNS may be obtained from CGFNS, 3600 Market Street, Suite 400, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2651 (USA).

CGFNS may also be contacted via their website at www.cgfns.org, by e-mail at support@cgfns.org, or to reach customer service phone 215/349-8767 ext 476. This phone is answered during office hours 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A message may be left on voice mail after business hours. The CGFNS Automated Voice Response System can be reached at 215/599-6200. CGFNS does not accept collect telephone calls.

- c. The CGFNS credentials evaluation process is based on level of license.

A registered nurse will complete the certification program, which includes credentials evaluation, CGFNS Qualifying Examination to evaluate nursing knowledge and a determination of English language proficiency through the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), TOEFL IBT, TOEIC, OR IELTS.

A practical nurse or second level nurse will complete the credentials evaluation process.

CGFNS provides information and applications.

- d. The nurse completes the Iowa application for license as an exam applicant and the NCLEX examination application.
- e. The NCLEX examination can be taken in any state for an Iowa license.

3. Does my license to practice nursing in my country have to be current?

The license must be valid (current) and unencumbered. This will be verified during the CGFNS review.

4. Do I need to have a social security number?

Yes. A social security number may be obtained after successful completion of the CGFNS process.

5. At what point do I need to have a social security number?

A social security number is required to apply for a license in Iowa. The application for license in Iowa is submitted after successful completion of the CGFNS process.

6. How do I obtain a nursing license in the United States (test, cost)?

Cost to obtain a license in the United States:

CGFNS certification program	\$368
CGFNS credentials evaluation service (CES)	\$278
NCLEX examination application	\$200
Iowa Board of Nursing Application	\$ 93
Evaluation of Criminal History Background	\$ 50

The NCLEX application packet is provided by the Iowa Board of Nursing. To request a packet please call 515/281-6488.

7. Do I need to take the CGFNS in the United States?

The CGFNS qualifying examination is offered four times per year at over 50 testing sites worldwide.

8. Do I need to take NCLEX to be licensed to practice nursing in Iowa?

Yes. The NCLEX is the required licensing examination.

9. Are any of these exams offered in other languages?

No. A test of English language is required as part of the CGFNS process.

10. Are there resources available to help me learn English in order to write the TOEFL, TOEFL IBT, TOEIC, or IELTS?

Community colleges and high schools provide classes or individual assistance.

11. Is there any program available to help me prepare for the licensing exams?

Contact a school of nursing; some offer classes and others offer individual assistance. All Iowa schools are listed on the Iowa Board of Nursing Website at www.state.ia.us/nursing.

12. Where can I go if I want to go back to school in nursing?

Contact a school of nursing. All Iowa schools are listed on the Iowa Board of Nursing website at www.state.ia.us/nursing.

13. With whom should I speak about a work visa?

Immigration and Naturalization Services (800-375-5283). (The Division of Latino Affairs may have more information.)